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Child Born With Caul Sees 'Han'ts'

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By Science Service

ANDOVER, Mass., Jan. 21.—Elderly Gullah Negroes on Sea Islands, off South Carolina and Georgia coast, still live in an eerie world of superstition. Widespread in the region is the belief that a child born with a caul has a gift of seeing "ghosses" and "ha'nts," Dr. W. R. Bascom of Northwestern University told the American Anthropological Association here recently.

JAN 21 1942

Like their African ancestors, older Negroes of this one-time plantation region of the old South credulously regard abnormalities of birth as having meaning for the future, Dr. Bascom learned by interviewing midwives along the islands. Better informed younger Negroes have little use for "old fogyism" of their parents, as a result of getting out among more modern thinking groups, the anthropologist reported.

Among Gullahs who cling to superstitious beliefs, the anthropologist found three who claim to be living proof that ghosts can be seen by one born with a caul. He was also told that a person born with a caul can tell if "whiskey has been dosed" and thus avoid evil charms put into his food or drink."

JAN 21 1942

That shape of a baby's head foretells qualities it will possess of smartness, industry, or determination is another of the Gullah folk beliefs which the older generation takes seriously, but the younger generation is shunning.